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THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AGENDA: FROM CONCEPT TO IMPLEMENTATION

Abstract: Environmental security was established academically in the early 1980s in the United States. The threat of environmental issues to national security has been the dominant approach among the many distinct interpretations. In 2008, environmental concerns, particularly climate change, were addressed for the first time in the context of EU security. The European security community frequently considers environmental aspects; however, this is usually limited to a strategic level before moving to implementation. In this article, we illustrate how environmental security has evolved, how it has permeated the European security community, and how it might advance further to secure the security of European citizens better.

Keywords: *Environmental Security, Climate Security, Climate Change, European Security, Common Security, and Defence Policy,*

Introduction

"Last year, natural disasters have displaced almost 19 million people all around the world, and for the second year in a row, climate impacts have displaced more people than war; I think this is an untold story which must be heard and on which we must act." This is a statement in June 2018 by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, at the high-level event: *Climate, peace, and security: the time for action* (EU-EEAS 2018). The Italian politician raised awareness for climate change as she expressed her feeling that "the focus is more and more about on the next electoral campaign, more than on the next generation. Moreover, the public discourse, the political focus is more and

more about national interest, national security, and national policies" (EU-EEAS 2018). The former argument concerns what is known from the Security Studies as a threat to human security and international security, while the latter reasons the inaction to that threat due to the national political focus. The inducement "we must act" necessitates proactive actions at the international level; how feasible is it for the national governments to set higher in their political agenda the proactive international security policies than the reactive policies for their national security interests?

Climate change and security seem to be challenging domains for Europe. In this paper, I argue that the European Union is still figuring out how to cope with climate change in order to ensure the effectiveness of its Common Security and Defence Policy. However, I acknowledge that addressing climate-related security risks is difficult due to conceptual ambiguity, institutional impediments, and a lack of resources. The member states do not associate the problem of climate change with security implications while at the same time they verge into militarizing climate refugees. This illustrates that the EU's climate change and security operations are driven by more than just conceptual uncertainty; they may also include challenging normative issues (Sonnsjö and Bremberg 2016, vii,2). While the tangible results are more valuable than conceptual arguments, in this case, the conceptual confusion has created skepticism about the consequences of climate change. In 2010, half of Americans believed that "the portrayal of climate change is 'generally exaggerated' and only 32 percent saw it as a serious potential threat to their lives" (Nagel 2011, 203). Such an electorate voted the Trump administration that revealed its disdain for science and its unwillingness to accept the realities of climate change (McFarland 2016, 221). The same conceptual ambiguity exists in numerous EU member states that regard climate change as a minor issue. Although the European Union is currently a leader in climate change policies, we should not take this position for granted if we do not convey to voters the potential effects of climate change on Europe's security. This paper aims to offer a better understanding and an unclouded outlook on climate change and EU security. The analysis of the intersection of research, policy, and practice will assist the security community in correlating and testing what EU actors say and do regarding climate change and security concerns

The rise of Environmental Security

While the literature on environmental issues and security started in the early 1980s, the first unconscious securitization of the environment came by Thomas Malthus in 1798. In his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, Malthus contends:
I think I may reasonably make two postulates. First, that food is necessary to the existence of man. Secondly, the passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain nearly in its present state. Assuming then my postulate as granted, I say, that the power of population is indefinitely more significant than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man. Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. A slight acquaintance with numbers will show the first power's immensity compared to the second. This implies a strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence. This difficulty must fall somewhere and must necessarily be severely felt by a large portion of humanity (Malthus 1798, 2–5).

This claim, while outdated, is the first documented environmental security reference. According to Copenhagen School's securitization theory, the link among humans (population), the environment (earth), and the potential for conflict is a 'securitization.' In the same vein, Fairfield Osborn restated the Malthusian argument in 1948 by relating aggressive attitudes, diminishing productive lands, and increasing population pressures (Matthew et al. 2010, 11). These early warnings met the growth of the sensitivity to the quality of the environment as it is expressed in the early 1960s.

In 1962, with the book *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson expressed her basic argument that the environmental change by anthropogenic activities needed to be viewed with extreme caution as we had started to destroy the systems that supported us. Carson's book contributed to the growth of the *deep ecology* movement that expressed the relationship between all living things and systems (Barnett 2013, 184). The environmental issues penetrated the security studies, and in 1983, Richard Ullman associated population growth, environmental quality, world hunger, and human rights with the United States' security. It was essential for Ullman, the policymakers to

demilitarize international relations as more serious nonmilitary threats were likely to grow and increase insecurity.

In 1989, except for the fall of the Berlin wall, we had the UN General Assembly that allowed the Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland Gro Harlem to produce the report *Our Common Future*, known as the Brundtland report. This report introduced the notion of sustainable development and changed the meaning of security; the message was unequivocal: "environmental stress is both a cause and an effect of political tension and military conflict… linkages among environment, development, and conflict are complex and, in many cases, poorly understood" (Brundtland 1987, 239–40). It was the first time that a significant international institution declared a linkage between the environment and human security.

Environmental security research can be divided into three generations. The first generation started in the early 1980s with a conceptual debate of environment and security. During this era, several skeptics either refused such an affair or lessened its influence. However, many international personalities and organizations reinforced the broadened perception of security that developed and raised awareness for human-induced environmental degradation. Nevertheless, the group of analysts who stood firm in a state-centered view with national defense as the priority argued for the absence of empirical evidence into how environment and security interact (Rønnfeldt 1997).

The relation between renewable resources and conflict was the main issue for the second generation, which tried to respond by offering empirical insights. Thomas Homer-Dixon directed the *Project on Environment, Population and Security* at the University of Toronto and the so-called research team, *the Toronto Group*. His intention was "to deviate from the conceptual polemic and base research on the firm empirical ground." (Rønnfeldt 1997). The Toronto Group's research agenda explains, by selecting cases in the developing world, the causal path from scarcity of cropland, forest, fish stocks, and water to the violent conflict. In February 1994, the journalist and travel writer Robert Kaplan rejected the conventional security agenda with his article *The Coming Anarchy*. In Kaplan's own words:

Mention "the environment" or "diminishing natural resources" in foreign-policy circles, and you meet a brick wall of skepticism or boredom. To conservatives especially, the very terms seem flaky. Public-policy foundations have contributed to the lack of interest by funding narrowly focused environmental studies replete with technical jargon, which foreign-affairs experts just let pile up on their desk. It is time to understand "the environment" for what it is: the national-security issue of the early twenty-first century. The political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and, possibly, rising sea levels in critical, overcrowded regions like the Nile Delta and Bangladesh—developments that will prompt mass migrations and, in turn, incite group conflicts—will be the core foreign-policy challenge from which most others will ultimately emanate, arousing the public and uniting varied interests leftover from the Cold War. In the twenty-first century, water will be in dangerously short supply in such diverse locales as Saudi Arabia, Central Asia, and the southwestern United States (Kaplan 2000, 20).

This dramatized illustration of the relationship between environmental degradation and international security was studied by President Clinton, who invited Homer-Dixon and the Toronto Group to work on environmental change and its security implications. The group's central thesis is that several types of environmental scarcity—supply-induced scarcity, demand-induced scarcity, and structural scarcity—can cause civil wars. While it concentrates the second generation on the empiric research of the previous topic, in the half of 1990s until present, the third generation enlarges the spectrum of research.

For the last 20 years, the third generation of environmental security has contained opponents, proponents, and proponents under conditions; the Copenhagen School belongs to the first. The securitization theory argues that the environmental issues should not be assumed as security issues because such a consideration drives the policymakers to move out of everyday politics into emergency politics. For Copenhagen School, emergency politics means a lack of standard rules and regulations that leads to depoliticization (Floyd 2010, 1–4). They propose as an antidote to depoliticization the desecuritisation of the environment as it is: "a shared responsibility for producing safe socio-ecological conditions of existence, and not an excuse to send in the troops" (Mason and Zeitoun 2013, 296). Nevertheless, the securitization theory is

neither the only dispute to environmental security nor the more extreme. A typical example of an opposing view is Verhoeven's thesis that environmental security narratives are theoretically and empirically problematic. He argues that Darfur is a victim of such theories as it "has been labeled 'the world's first climate change conflict,' masking the long-term political-economic dynamics and Sudanese agency underpinning the crisis." For Verhoeven, the beneficiaries are Sudan's globalized Islamist elites and foreign investors, while it undermines the local communities. Actors instrumentalize the linking of climate change and security for three reasons: first, the United States' new national security agenda for the failed states, second the progressive voices that overemphasize climate change and the efforts of academia and policymakers to provide "complexity and multi causality of conflicts" (Verhoeven 2011).

In the same vein, several researchers disconnect climate change and resource scarcities with security affairs and do not concede the Toronto Group's environmental security concept. For Ole Magnus Theisen, professor at Norwegian University, Kenya's civil peace and wetter years were less safe than drier proving that water scarcity does not breed violence (Theisen 2012). Bernauer and Siegfried test a contiguous hypothesis of conflict over water by studying the Syr Darya River in Central Asia. They claim that the slow-onset shifts in the river's runoff will not affect the states' security as the latter adapt (Bernauer and Siegfried 2012). Similarly, Tir and Stinnett, by studying river treaties for the period 1950-2000, conclude that solid institutions can regulate tensions at shared river basins and mitigate the conflicts that come from water scarcity and climate change (Tir and Stinnett 2012). Finally, Feitelson et al. focus their research on the potential conflicts resulting from the climate change effects on water resources in the Israeli-Palestinian case. Their main argument is that Israeli-Palestinian relations are a 'high-politics' issue. It has no relation with climate change as there are desalination programs to overcome water scarcities (Feitelson, Tamimi, and Rosenthal 2012).

Contrary to the opponents mentioned above, there are proponents of the relationship between security and environmental degradation. The German historian Jurgen Zimmerer argues that the fear of resource scarcity and space causes genocides. Genocides result from competition between two groups for space and more resources. He proposes that we should act with sustainable prevention to protect the states from climate change and prevent refugees' streaming (Zimmerer

2014). Levy and Sidel, both physicians, also associate collective violence with climate change. They point out that sea-level rise and climate change combined with other factors (low income, social inequality, etc.) are causes of violence (Levy and Sidel 2014).

However, many researchers face environmental degradation as a threat multiplier, and they support the securitization of the issue under conditions. For most environmental security analysts, resource scarcity, human-induced environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters amplify existing strained relations. The civil war in South Soudan, for Sefa-Nyarko, was a mixture of causes and the resource-curse theories explain only part of it. Colonial histories of discrimination, ethnosocial grievances, governmental inabilities, and religious allegiances are the primary triggers for these conflicts; the environmental security issues are important, but they have not a vital role in this conflict (Sefa-Nyarko 2016). Likewise, Shweta Jayawardhan emphasizes that climate change alone is not enough to displace people and cause mass migrations or conflicts. He notes that many academics reject the definition "climate refugees" and prefer the UNHCR'S term: Environmental Displaced Persons (EDP's).

Classification of Environmental Security concepts

In half of the nineties, the environmental security scholars were divided basically according to the response they gave to the question: "should the environmental issues be integrated into the security concept?" After this stage, the question became, "what is the security threat and who is the threatened entity?" In 2000 Allenby contended that for a comprehensive environmental security approach, we need to consider four dimensions: resource security dimension, which is divided into resources flow issues (e.g., nuclear materials) and competition for scarce resources (e.g., land, water); energy security dimension; a biological dimension which is divided into human systems, biological communities, and food systems; and standard security dimensions (Allenby 2000). All the dimensions above refer to the national security concerns of the states. The analysis is focused on how the states will protect themselves from the threats that environmental issues produce.

Barnett goes one step further by widening the spectrum of the interpretations of environmental security, but he argues that the state-centric approach for the threatened entity is dominant. In his analysis, he suggests the table below:

Security concept	Entity to be secured	Main source of threat
Ecology security	Natural environment	Human activity
Common security	Nation state	Environmental changes
Environmental violence	Nation state	War
National security	Nation state	Environmental changes
Greening defense	Armed forces	eco-terrorists
Human security	Individuals	environmental changes

Figure 1. Six critical interpretations of environmental security (Barnett 2013, 195)

For Barnett, the research focuses on the security of the state, emphasizing environmental change as the cause of violence. However, he gives space for a more integrated theory that contains human security (local perspective), national security (national perspective), and international security (global perspective). He claims that the scholars "still largely understood to be about threats to the nation-state rather than to the environment per se, to other states, or individuals" (Barnett 2013, 204–5). Both Allenby and Barnett explain how the last 20 years, the environmental security concept has broadened; however, the latter suggests that it is time to deepen it. For that reason, he points out that environmental studies should face environmental security as a human security issue; this will make the research and policy institutions cooperate on common environmental problems.

Rita Floyd, who concentrated her doctoral research on the securitization theory about the US environmental security policies, argues that the environmental security research should be more profound and concentrated on the human security discourse. She tests Copenhagen's school thesis that the securitizations of environmental issues are morally wrong, whereas desecuritisations are morally right. She concludes that the questions of who can securitize, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effects cannot reveal the intentions of the securitizing actors. Suppose we theorize that by securitizing the environment, the security

institutions maintain security business, as usual. In that case, we can evaluate the environmental security policies whether we found the identities of the beneficiaries of any given environmental security policy (Floyd 2010, 1-8,188-93). She explains, however, that her revised securitization theory, while partially answering why actors securitize the environment, does not answer how should securitize the environment.

Environmental Security and the European Union's security apparatus

In Maastricht on 7 February 1992, a few months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the European Union announced the Treaty on the European Union; the article J.4 states: "The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to secure the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defense policy, which might in time lead to a common defense" (European Communities 1992). The Treaty established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as the second pillar of the new three-pillar structure of the European Union. [2] The security concept of CFSP was expressed through the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), which was established to protect Europe where the United States or NATO had no interests and to "assume greater control over its security fate" (Howorth 2014, 4). This common defense concept hibernated the United Kingdom and France initiative to announce on 4 December 1998 the *Saint-Malo Joint Declaration on European Defence*. Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair agreed to boost the framing of a standard defense policy by reminding: "It will be important to achieve full and rapid implementation of the Amsterdam provisions on CFSP…The main idea behind this movement is the rapid reaction to the "new risks" ("Franco–British St. Malo Declaration (4 December 1998)" 1998). [3] In 1999, the ESDI transformed into the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

Europe turned a page in its security policy by developing defense capabilities and planning agendas. Howorth observed "the novelty of both political decision-making and autonomy—the latter applying both to politics and military capacity," and emphasized the "move from the unconscious (nobody in 1998-9 had many ideas how the project would work out in practice) to the 'conscious' (some kind of operation reality if not a definitive end-state) (Howorth 2014, 8–10). ESDP lasted for ten years until the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 and the creation of the

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). During this decade, climate security was smoothly introduced to the political agenda of the EU. CSDP was the first 'conscious' security attempt that tried to address the CFSP's mandate to "… include all questions related to the security of the Union." The Treaty of Lisbon, except for CSDP, introduced some new actors to address the CFSP's objectives: The High-Representative/Vice-President (HR-VP), the Council President, and the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Howorth 2014, 20). These actors set the security agenda regarding proactive and reactive responses to potential security challenges. The European Union finally answered the question of United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger "Who do I call if I want to call Europe?" In order to deal with the "new dangers" and the new opportunities, " the actors mentioned above built their mandate according to the European Security Strategy (ESS). On 12 December 2003, the European Union created the ESS to emphasize that "no single country can tackle today's complex problems on its own" (EU 2003a). It was also the first time that an official European document included the threats by global warming related to water security, migratory movements, and further turbulence (Ecan). After five years, the revision of ESS consolidated the environmental security concept to the EU's policies as climate change was one out of five global challenges and critical threats (EU 2008, 5).

The 2008's revised edition of the ESS by the European Council followed the recommendations from the High Representative and the European Commission. The latter produced the first EU paper on *Climate Change and International Security* and declared a relation between all the appeals for humanitarian aid with climate change. The threats that EU theorized as climate-related were: conflict over resources, economic damage and risk to coastal cities and critical infrastructure, loss of territory and border disputes, environmentally-induced migration, situations of fragility and radicalization, tensions over energy supply, pressure on international governance (EU-High Representative and EC 2008). The environmental security principles of the EU transformed the Union into a proponent of the relationship between security and climate change. However, this situation changed gradually. After the initial enthusiasm and the EU's compliance with the standards of the United Nations' report *on Climate change and its possible security implications* (UN-SG 2009), we had the prevalence of skeptical voices. In 2011 the Council of the European Union neglected climate change as a factor in conflict prevention while emphasizing that European Union should operate in long-term structural conflict prevention. (EU

2011). Three years later, the promising EU Conflict Early Warning System (EWS) was the second attempt for an early warning system after the so-called Gothenburg Program in 2001 (EU-EEAS 2014). EWS contained no reference to climate or environmental change, and among 25 indicators for its *Global Conflict Risk Index*, only the Water Stress was an environmentally oriented indicator (EU-EC 2016). Possibly, vital clues for the future of the EWS can be found in the Gothenburg Review by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). The executive director of EPLO, Catherine Woollard, three years before the formation of EWS, stressed that the EU should improve policy tools and evaluation to prevention mechanisms and emphasized the importance of climate change as a cause of conflict (Woollard 2011, 1,10). She explained an imbalance between crisis response and conflict prevention which created a lack of coherence. For Woollard, the Commission's attempts to keep key staff outside EEAS undermined the role of the latter (Woollard 2011, 6). Similar conclusions came from Stockholm University. In 2016 a group of Swedish researchers studied how development and defense EU-actors framed and integrated the climate security risks. They identified that there is "a need to consider the implications of climate change at an early stage of analysis and policy work" (Sonnsjö and Bremberg 2016, vii). After nine interviews with experts within EEAS and an extensive literature review of EU's policy documents, the group confirmed the EU's failure to link in a coherent manner development, security, and climate change; it continued to keep the three issues separated about economic, social and environmental sustainability (Sonnsjö and Bremberg 2016, 12).

Conclusion

The correlation between science, policy, and practice will help us evaluate what is said by the EU actors and what is done concerning climate change and security issues. In half of the nineties, the question was: "should the environmental issues be integrated into the security concept?" After this stage, the question became, "what is the security threat and who is the threatened entity by environmental issues?" These questions could not answer the question "how should securitize the environment to improve human security?" By answering the latter question, we move from 'why' questions to 'how possible' questions, which can be translated into proactive policies and strategies. The European security strategies need a holistic approach that includes the human-

induced environmental change—environmental degradation, gas emissions, ozone layer depletion, climate change, etc.—and its security implications. Such an approach will allow the EU's security actors to have-long term predictions and short-term reactions for environmental issues that are threats or threat multipliers. Currently, international relations and its actors have much more interdependence than they used to have; the European Union as a global actor who affects these relations through the Common Security and Defense Policy should fulfill the EU's citizens' security needs and expectations. Suppose we answer how the EU's security actors could adequately integrate the environmental security dimensions related to climate change. In that case, we will have built a bridge between Union's environmental, foreign, and security policies. The bridge will also span the gap separating scientists on one side and EU policymakers. This paper tried to contribute to the academic understanding of European Security through the lenses of the environment. However, it may impact a more comprehensive comprehension of security instabilities resulting from environmental changes. The range of security risks for different referent objects—the nation-state, people, international society, biosphere—produces different ways of understanding the environmental security concepts. These different understandings legitimize different practices with radically different implications for environmental security policies and practices. With several analysts observing that the environmental security concept has broadened over the last twenty years, deepening will allow cooperation on common environmental problems. Currently, environmental studies face environmental security affairs as human security issues, while many policy institutions use a state-centric approach. We need to develop a methodology for evaluating the environmental security policies of various security actors based on their mandates. In other words, we should be able to establish how well the bodies in charge of developing and implementing environmental security policies address such concerns.

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[2] The three pillars were: the European Communities, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters (PJCCM)
[3] In Amsterdam on 2 October 1997 signed The Treaty of Amsterdam that amended the Treaty on European Union by creating the common strategy, a new office, the 'Secretary-General of the Council responsible for the CFSP', and a new structure, the 'Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit.